

Seattle Pedestrian Advisory Board Meeting Minutes, November 14, 2007

Meeting called to order at 6:09 P.M.

SPAB Members Present: Celeste Gilman, Chair; Ben Smith, Vice-Chair; Paul Niebanck, Mark Bandy, Howard Wu, T. Frick-McNamara, Mary Lou Siebert, Tom Williams, members.

SPAB Members Absent: Chris Tachibana, Petaki Cobell, members.

Also present: Jim Curtin, SDOT liaison to SPAB, and Brian Lee (liaison from the City's Bike Board).

Presenters: From the City Attorney's Office, Suzanne Skinner (record retention). From Seattle FRIENDS, Autumn Pulver and Ryan Thurston (Aurora Bridge).

October's minutes: Approved by voice vote.

Record Retention, presented by Suzanne Skinner, City Attorney's Office.

Ms. Skinner said that the City is a defendant in a legal action and that records of SPAB board communication may be required to be presented during the discovery process. She said we should retain all records and that each board member should maintain separate folders on their computers for documents and emails relating to SPAB business. She further stated that board members should not leave "substantive voice mails". As a first step, Jim said he would retain the board's list-serv material.

Mark asked if there were any limits to this, citing a conversation he had with Howard as an example. Suzanne responded by saying that it was "better to over-save." T followed by asking specifically if one-to-one conversations have to be documented. Suzanne said "Yes, if pedestrian issues are discussed", adding, however, that the City does not have a written records retention policy for its boards and commissions.

Paul was concerned that these sorts of demands would have a chilling effect on board discussions as one may want to avoid trouble. Suzanne said that there was nothing that would legally infringe anyone's First Amendment rights, but that such concerns were a "natural effect of litigation." She encouraged us to continue our business as before, but just make sure that we retain records of our conversations, activities, and documents. As volunteers we are protected from any personal liability.

Seattle FRIENDS, (FRemont Individuals & Employees Nonprofit to Decrease Suicides), potential Aurora Bridge Barrier. presented by Autumn Pulver and Ryan Thurston.

Autumn presented a PowerPoint document that talked about the frequency of suicide attempts, the demographics of jumpers, safety issues for both jumpers and innocent bystanders, and the economic costs of dealing with a suicide attempt.

Her group has concluded that a barrier is the only viable solution to prevent suicides from the bridge, but that there are challenges to that on a number of fronts. These include:

- As an historic structure, the bridge would be subject to historic preservation regulations and processes.
- Multiple jurisdictions. It's owned by the state, but SDOT maintains it.
- A barrier would cost money to construct and to maintain.
- Nearby residents may object to a barrier for either aesthetic reasons or because it may impair their views.

Autumn said that some money has been allocated by both city and state for preliminary design work. She asked that we write a letter to support this process.

Letter to State of Washington concerning the state's pedestrian and bike plan. Dongho Chang of the bike board wrote a letter about this. It was forwarded to SPAB for comments. The latest version was approved by voice vote as a joint SBAB-SPAB letter.

#### SPAB 2008 Work Plan Development.

This discussion began with a recap from those who attended meetings with various city officials, who included Councilmembers Nick Licata and Jan Drago, Department of Neighborhoods Director Stella Chao, Department of Transportation Director Grace Crunican, Department of Planning and Development Director Diane Sugimura, and Mayor Greg Nickels.

Paul said he was "encouraged" by what he heard at the meetings he attended. T wasn't quite sure she got an answer to one question that was asked of each official: "What can we do for you?"

Ben said that city officials want our support and that we can help them achieve their goals, but cautioned that we will not always agree with them on either goals or priorities.

Celeste felt that it was important to make the personal connections these meetings afforded, adding that as an advisory board, we're not as constrained by the city's organizational structure and culture.

T ended this part of the conversation by stating that it would be crucial to follow through and keep these new communications channels open to keep the conversation going.

With this background, the board began discussing potential areas to focus on in 2008. A number of broad categories were suggested, including:

1. Policy
2. Budget and Funding
3. Safety and Education
4. Projects
5. Climate

6. Outreach
7. Planning (includes Ped and Bike plans, including the state plan that combines the two)
8. Transit
9. Design/Guidance

T said she would put the projects into categories. Celeste said that she would add in dates and time intervals and post the resulting file to the board for comments.

Celeste turned the discussion to high-priority items. She suggested SDOT's prioritization of sidewalk projects. On this, Mark added that if we sent a letter to support this it would give some political cover to both SDOT and the Mayor.

Mark said he will follow up with WSDOT on the viaduct projects; Ben said he'd do the same with the state's Pedestrian/Bike plan.

Howard said he'd take on the Urban Mobility Plan.

#### Nominations and Elections of Board Officers.

Celeste nominated Chris for Secretary, Tom nominated Celeste for Chair, and T nominated Ben for Vice-Chair. Each of these candidates was approved by voice vote with no opposing votes.

#### Miscellaneous business.

Howard will be added as a moderator to the list-serv. He will add additional features to our Yahoo website so we can get more value from it.

Mark will take on the task of figuring out record retention expectations.

#### SPAB recruitment.

Based on conversations with Stella Chao as mentioned above, targeted recruitment was done in both the High Point community and with the International District Housing Alliance.

Jim has received four applications so far. They can be submitted until Thanksgiving weekend.

#### Next meeting, December 12.

Celeste was hopeful that Sound Transit would be available to give a presentation. The rest of the meeting would be devoted to the 2008 workplan.